

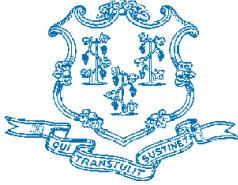


State Representative

Lewis J. Wallace, Jr.

2003 End of Session Report

Serving Danbury's 109th Assembly District



Dear Neighbor,

Together we can continue to move Connecticut forward and improve the economic well being and quality of life for everyone.

As we went into session this year, we were faced with a 4 billion dollar budget gap due to declining tax revenues brought on by the recession and September 11th.

The budget I voted for closes corporate business tax loopholes and requires the wealthy to pay their fair share of estate taxes. It reduces the rate of government spending for the next two years, but preserves programs important to middle-income taxpayers: the property tax credit, education cost sharing, and municipal aid, all which help reduce the property tax burden felt by hardworking people throughout Danbury and the state.

Finally, it preserves entitlement programs such as the ConnPACE prescription drug program for seniors and general assistance for people who are homeless, awaiting social security disability payments or are taking care of a homebound spouse.

Very truly yours,

*Lewis J. Wallace, Jr.
State Representative*

Reforming State Government

I was outraged by the recent headlines reporting the squandering of taxpayer dollars. I supported and voted for HB 6417, a comprehensive reform package which establishes a prequalification process for state construction contractors and requires greater legislative and agency oversight of state construction projects. The bill prohibits "insider" communications by requiring all bidders to get the same access to information before and during the bid process. Gifts from bidders to any state employee are strictly prohibited. The establishment of a prequalification system restores integrity to the state construction process, and will raise the quality of major contractors used on state construction projects. These reforms will minimize and eliminate abuse in state contracting dollars. (PA 03-215)





Protecting Children and Teachers in Schools

After three years of hard work on poor indoor air quality in schools, we passed SB 6426 that seeks to ensure our teachers and students learn in a healthy environment. PA 03-220 seeks to prevent the development of future indoor air quality problems, and provides a funding mechanism to remedy "certified school indoor air quality emergencies." It calls for greater attention to the proper maintenance of all facilities, the establishment and implementation of indoor air quality programs in each school district, and changes the requirements for new construction, extensions or renovations of schools to prevent unhealthy conditions from developing.

All new school construction or extensions will now be subject to Phase I site assessments, and prohibited from building flat roofs. National standards for heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems now will be enforced as well as the proper system maintenance. In new, renovated, or extended schools, maintenance staff must be trained properly in the operation and maintenance of the building to stop the development of poor indoor air quality. By January 1, 2008, all new, renovated or extended school buildings must be inspected and evaluated to check for any indoor air problem. This evaluation must occur once every 5 years thereafter. Evaluation results will be made public, and allow for any potential problems to be remediated before they become too costly. If a school detects a problem, the Department of Public Health can declare it a "certified school indoor air quality emergency" and the school can apply to the Department of Education for a grant to remedy the problem if the cleanup and remediation will exceed \$100,000.

Finally, this bill enables school districts or individual schools to establish indoor air quality committees to address concerns and help guarantee maintenance. Furthermore, school district safety committees cannot be prohibited from addressing indoor air quality issues in their local schools. (PA 03-220)

Improving Students' Health Care

I was pleased to help pass HB 5931 that allows diabetic students to test their own blood sugar levels in the classroom if they have a doctor's note. Legislation allowing properly supervised paraprofessionals to administer Epi-Pen medication to children with allergic reactions was also enacted. (PA 03-211)



Saving Lives Through Amber Alert

AMBER Alert was named for a nine-year-old girl, Amber Hagerman, who was kidnapped by a stranger and later found dead in 1996 in Texas. This plan allows for law enforcement agencies to notify broadcasters of a child kidnapping. This session we passed HB 5072 giving immunity to broadcasters who participate in the AMBER Alert Plan. The information covered under this bill includes a description of the abducted child and the circumstances surrounding the abduction, including information on the suspected abductor.

This information is ONLY covered when it has been provided to the broadcasters by a law enforcement agency. This new law allows the broadcasters to help reach the goal of the AMBER plan, which is to have as many people in the surrounding community help in the capture of the suspect and the return of the child to their home by broadcasting enough information so individuals can report to the police if they do see someone fitting the suspect's description. (PA 03-111)

Protecting Our Environment

I voted for HB 6048 which requires certain coal-burning electric plants to reduce the amount of mercury they emit, starting July 1, 2008. It sets standards the plants must meet, requires plants to test their generating units quarterly, and requires owners to submit quarterly reports to the environmental protection commissioner. The bill also requires the DEP commissioner to review mercury emission limits applicable to all units in the state by July 1, 2012 and authorizes him to adopt regulations imposing more stringent mercury emission limits on or after that date. Implementation of the bill's provisions concerning emissions standards, testing and reporting does not suspend procedures and requirements in state regulations. (PA 03-72)



Restraining Electric Costs

With the passage of SB 733, we guaranteed that Connecticut residents would not be subjected to runaway electric prices. With consumers in mind, we acted promptly, since "Standard Offer" electric prices would no longer be enforced on December 31, 2003. Without this price protection, residents would have faced skyrocketing electric bills. PA 03-135 continues the Standard Offer price control under a new plan called "Transitional Standard Offer." The new Transitional Standard Offer controls consumers' electric prices by enforcing a cap. Along with this cap, we also require more efficient and cleaner power to be supplied to Connecticut's customers. PA 03-135 is friendly to both the consumer and the environment. It ensures Connecticut residents don't have to fear their lights going out, nor their monthly bills escalating. (PA 03-135)

Protecting Your Privacy

The Federal Bureau of Investigation shows that approximately 900,000 people fall victim to identity theft each year. We have addressed some of the issues surrounding identity theft this past session by passing SB 688 which assists victims by increasing penalties and changing how businesses collect credit information when you make a purchase. Businesses will now be prevented from printing anything other than the last five digits of your credit or debit card and they must throw out any customer records that have personal information no longer needed. The law also prohibits individuals, firms and corporations from publicly disclosing Social Security numbers, with some exemptions, and places a two-year statute of limitations on civil actions against someone identified as a theft violator. Identity theft can be financial fraud which includes bank fraud, credit fraud, computer and telecommunications fraud, social security fraud and tax fraud to name a few. Victims of these types of crimes can now request that false information be removed from public records. Credit rating agencies may now block credit information from this type of crime from your credit report. (PA 03-156)



Protecting Consumers

When people buy a car they typically spend the extra money to get an extended warranty to insure their purchase. However, there are certain loopholes that allow the manufacturer to avoid covering some repairs. We passed SB 922 that will protect the customer by expanding the warranty to cover operational and structural failure due to normal wear and tear in addition to defects. Warranties must also cover indemnification for repair, replacement or maintenance of a product instead of just repair. Any subsidiary of the manufacturer, including the car dealer, will now be responsible for these services when an extended warranty is purchased. (PA 03-50)

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Increasing Access to Health Insurance for Connecticut Workers

I voted for SB 353 which will increase accessibility to health insurance for small employers. There are approximately 77,000 Connecticut workers in companies with fewer than 50 employees who do not have access to affordable health insurance. This legislation has added small businesses to the list of those eligible to purchase group hospital, medical, and surgical health insurance under the state employee health plan. It also increases coverage for nonprofit corporations, not just those with state contracts. Passing this bill helps small business lower costs, increase the number of people who are insured, raise the general level of state health, and help thousands of employees. (PA 03-149)

Representative Lewis J. Wallace, Jr.
Legislative Office Building, Room 2103
Hartford, CT 06105-1591
Phone: 1-800-842-8267
E-mail: Lew.Wallace@po.state.ct.us
On the Web: www.cga.state.ct.us

LEGISLATION CHECKLIST

If you would like additional information on recent legislation in any of the following areas, please log onto www.cga.state.ct.us or check the subject you are interested in and return this form to me.

- ☐ Business
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Crime
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Government Administration and Elections
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Major Public Acts
- ☐ Municipalities
- ☐ Real Estate
- ☐ Seniors
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Other _____
(please specify)

Name _____

Address _____
